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"GERMANY FOR GERMANS" **XENOPHOBIA AND RACIST VIOLENCE IN GERMANY**

Human Rights Watch/Helsinki
Human Rights Watch

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Cover photo: Hooded neo-Nazis give the Hitler salute on August 26, 1992 in front of a burning Trabant car during heavy clashes between police and neo-Nazis in front of an asylum hostel in Rostock. Copyright © Reuters/Bettman.

Human Rights Watch/Helsinki

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This report was prepared for publication by Anne Kuper and Lene Simon, associates with Human Rights Watch/Helsinki.

I. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Federal Republic of Germany has undergone an entire epoch of history in the past five years since trainloads of East Germans crossed into Hungary and Czechoslovakia searching for a route to the West in the spring and summer of 1989. In November 1989, people rushed over the Berlin Wall, border crossings opened, and crowds danced on top of the grim edifice that had scarred the city once known as the "capital of Europe." The euphoria culminated one year later in December 1990 in the Treaty of Unification. Two states became one: the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) was transformed into five federal states (Bundesländer) that joined with the existing eleven federal states to constitute the Federal Republic of Germany. This transformation has been accompanied by heady euphoria at freedom of movement, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, and freedom to buy a fabulous array of consumer goods provided by a free market economy. It has also been accompanied by a dramatic increase in unemployment in the East and heavy tax burdens on the more prosperous citizens of the West. Resentment of these two economic consequences of unification has led to bitterness with the present and nostalgia for the past. Many former citizens of the GDR feel a loss of a sense of community, as well as a loss of jobs and social support. Many also feel a loss of their bearings and values. In the former West Germany many citizens resent the economic cost of unification and are angry that the social process of unification is not already complete.

This darker side of the transformation has had a violent, sometimes murderous, aspect. The racism endemic in many societies has exploded in a public way in Germany in the past five years. Hostility against foreigners, a phenomenon seen in many countries, has linked up with right-wing and neo-Nazi movements in Germany to yield incidents of violence and brutality. Television audiences around the world watched with horror as the local population in certain German cities crowded around and supported neo-Nazi assaults and arson attacks on defenseless asylum seekers. People whose only offense was that they did not look German have been killed. Other "foreigners" have been driven from their houses. Widespread beatings of "foreigners" seem to have become a regular feature of major holidays in some places in Germany.¹

It is clear that racist attacks and killings are not unique to Germany. Genocide has been committed in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. Many violent attacks against foreigners have occurred in France, England, Sweden, and other West European democracies in the early 1990s. However, the German government was slow to respond to attacks on foreigners and to initiate specific measures to combat right-wing violence. In fact, "the federal government must shoulder much of the blame for the increase in right-wing violence" that took place during the first years following unification.² What is more, history has left a special legacy for Germany. The massive persecution and execution of "non-Aryans" during the Nazi era set a backdrop for violence against foreigners that is too vivid to forget.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

Taken as a whole, Germany has been confronted with a disturbing escalation in violent crimes against those who are different, and especially those who are perceived as not ethnic German during the period since unification. For example, between 1990 and 1992, there was over an 800 percent increase in the number of attacks on foreigners.³

Due, in part, to more forceful government measures to combat xenophobic violence, there has been a significant decrease in the number of violent crimes against foreigners in Germany in the last two years.⁴ Government statistics indicate that, from 1992 to 1994, there was a 46 percent decline in the number of violent attacks against non-Germans. The government has expanded the number of police and prosecutors trained to investigate and prosecute cases of xenophobic violence. It has also restricted the right to asylum, a step long urged by the extreme right, thereby expropriating a major aspect of the far right's political platform, at least temporarily.

Despite the significant drop in the number of violent attacks, however, the figures were still significantly higher in 1994 than prior to 1991. Figures for 1994 were still more than 400 percent higher than comparable figures for 1990. According to the Office to Protect the Constitution, 1,233 violent attacks motivated by xenophobia were reported to the German authorities in the first eleven months of 1994. According to foreigners' rights groups, a large number of attacks also went unreported.

There were also troubling failures by local and federal authorities in responding to specific cases of violence. Although the police response to attacks on foreigners does appear to have improved significantly over the past two years, many foreigners are still under the impression that they cannot rely on the German police to protect them. This impression is based, in part, on foreigners' experiences with the police during the 1990-92 period. What is more, foreigners' rights groups and our own research indicate that there is a growing problem of police brutality

against foreigners, which makes it very difficult to assess whether foreigners are reporting xenophobic crimes as frequently as they may have done in previous years. This is especially so for foreigners whose residency status has not been determined or for illegal aliens who fear deportation. These groups are particularly vulnerable to violence, and the least likely to report such violence to German authorities.

Moreover, other forms of xenophobic violence appear to be on the increase in Germany. Anti-Semitic crimes soared during 1994. Government statistics indicate that an estimated 1,040 anti-Semitic crimes occurred during 1994, representing a 60 percent increase over 1993. Of these, fifty-six were violent offenses. Although this category of crimes includes criminal harassment and intimidation, it also includes expressive conduct that Human Rights Watch/Helsinki believes should not be criminalized. Such statistics may, however, be a measure of the depth of anti-Semitic sentiment in the society, and as such are troublesome. A growing number of right-wing crimes against other minorities, such as the handicapped and homosexuals, was also reported.

In October 1992 Human Rights Watch/Helsinki (then Helsinki Watch) published a report on xenophobia and right-wing violence in Germany. Based largely on information gathered during a Human Rights Watch/Helsinki mission to Germany in May and June 1992, the report examined the increase in violent attacks against foreigners from 1990 to mid-1992. The report identified serious problems in a number of areas: the police response to violence against foreigners; the prosecutors' response to xenophobic crime; the judiciary's response to trials of skinheads and others who attack foreigners; and the federal government's response to the rise in violence aimed at foreigners. The report concluded that:

Germany is currently confronted with a political and social crisis that has profound consequences for German citizens, as well as for the foreigners who seek refuge within its borders. . . . Rioting skinheads throwing Molotov cocktails at refugee shelters, onlookers applauding and cheering, slogans such as "foreigners out" and "Germany for Germans", inevitably recall images of Nazi terror during the Third Reich. Physical injury, fear and humiliation have become a daily experience for foreigners in unified Germany.⁵

Human Rights Watch/Helsinki found at the time that the German state's response to the violence had significantly contributed to an environment in which anti-foreigner sentiments flourished and appeared to be tolerated by the state.

Shortly after Human Rights Watch/Helsinki released its 1992 report, three long-time Turkish residents were killed when neo-Nazis firebombed their homes in the West German town of Mölln. Prior to Mölln, the right-wing violence had been directed primarily at asylum seekers, as opposed to the homes of long-time Turkish residents. The violence shocked the conscience of many Germans, especially because two of the victims in Mölln, as well as many in the ethnic Turkish community in Germany, were born in Germany, spoke German and considered Germany their home. Nevertheless, they were viewed as foreign and died because of that perception.

The deaths in Mölln and the dramatic increase in violence against foreigners in the fall of 1992 were followed by large-scale domestic protests against racism and violence, as well as by increasing international condemnation. After much foot-dragging, the German government responded to the crisis by adopting firmer measures to combat the violence. These measures included the formation of a working group to improve police methods for monitoring and combatting violent right-wing extremists in the various states. The federal prosecutor also began to take responsibility for investigating some of the attacks on foreigners by right-wing extremists; an important step toward improving the response of state prosecutorial bodies.

These firmer measures, which included stepped up police surveillance of far-right groups, were, on the whole, a welcome change in the government's response. However, the measures sometimes went further than necessary by excessively restricting expression, association and assembly. For example, the government banned several neo-Nazi political organizations, after which police conducted numerous raids on the offices and homes of their members, confiscating propaganda materials and some weapons, and making numerous arrests. Prosecutors also began more forcefully to enforce German laws prohibiting the use of Nazi symbols and prohibiting denials that the Holocaust occurred.

This report focuses on acts of violence by right-wing extremists and the response of the German state. While viewing extremist violence with great concern, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki at the same time opposes laws that prohibit the expression of anti-foreigner or anti-Semitic sentiments, as well as laws that prohibit groups that hold such views from forming associations and holding public gatherings, so long as that speech, association or assembly does not rise to the level of incitement to or participation in violence. While Human Rights Watch/Helsinki recognizes the historical context in which Germany first adopted such laws, we believe that such prohibitions on speech, association and assembly are overly broad. Freedom of speech, association and assembly are basic human rights that should be respected to the fullest extent possible. The exercise of these rights in a hateful fashion short of incitement to violence can best be countered by other forms of speech, association and assembly, such as anti-racist demonstrations and anti-racism educational efforts, without infringing the rights themselves. Furthermore, while prohibitions on these rights may be adopted to protect minorities, they are often used by majoritarian governments against minority groups. Human Rights Watch has adopted a policy against such laws.⁶

Throughout 1991 and 1992, the German government coupled its condemnation of violent attacks on foreigners with a call for restricting the number of asylum seekers in Germany. "By linking these two issues, the government fail[ed] to acknowledge the severity of the crimes being committed against foreigners by German citizens. Instead it subtly shift[ed] the focus and the blame to the foreigners themselves."⁷ On May 26, 1993, the Bundestag (parliament) voted 521 to 132 to amend the country's constitutionally-guaranteed right to asylum. Since July 1, 1993, when the new asylum law took effect, the right of asylum does not exist for refugees who pass through safe countries before they reach Germany or who come from homelands deemed safe.⁸ Legislation defines safe transit countries and safe home countries. Since July 1993, there has been a significant reduction in the number of foreigners legally entering Germany. Government statistics indicate that the number of foreigners seeking asylum in Germany decreased by 60 percent from 1993 to 1994.⁹

The asylum debate has left a legacy that continues to have a negative impact on foreigners - whether asylum seekers or not - in Germany. It explicitly put the burden of right-wing violence on the victims - the asylum seekers - rather than on the perpetrators. Schmalz-Jacobsen, the federal commissioner for foreigners' affairs, put it succinctly: "The asylum debate was irresponsible at times. It is easy to destroy a climate, and hard to create one."¹⁰ Numerous others agree that the asylum debate encouraged hostility and violence against foreigners in Germany. Ernst Uhrlau, the director of the Office to Protect the Constitution in Hamburg, noted that the impact of the asylum debate was great on the youths who participated in spontaneous violence against foreigners.¹¹

The government had pushed for restrictions on the right to asylum, arguing that it was necessary to prevent a further escalation of xenophobic violence. However, on May 29, 1993, only three days after the Bundestag voted to restrict the right of asylum, five long-time Turkish residents died when four youths allegedly set fire to their house in the town of Solingen. This was the worst single attack on foreigners since unification and set off yet another wave of attacks on foreigners.

Following the tragedy in Solingen, Chancellor Helmut Kohl, faced with severe criticism of his handling of right-wing violence, vowed in June 1993 to crack down on German right-wing extremists, calling for tougher sentences, more police power and tighter restrictions on militant right-wing extremist groups.

In the almost two years since Solingen, the German government has taken numerous measures to combat xenophobia and right-wing violence in Germany. In 1994, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki conducted a follow-up mission to Germany to evaluate the changes in violent attacks against foreigners that had occurred in Germany in the intervening years. Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interviewed, among others, government officials at the federal, state, and municipal levels; representatives of nongovernmental organizations; asylum seekers; long-time non-German residents of Germany; foreign-born naturalized German citizens; police officers; and religious workers. Human Rights Watch/Helsinki visited cities in the new federal states, as well as in the western states.¹²

In each locale, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki was interested in learning what measures the German government had taken to respond to problems identified in 1992, and how effective the measures had been, both in statistical terms and in the view of foreigners in Germany. Human Rights Watch/Helsinki was, of course, also eager to learn what further steps were planned to address right-wing violence. This report discusses the findings of the mission and relates them to the issues highlighted in the 1992 report.

This new report begins by recommending specific government actions that should be taken based on the findings of the investigation. This is followed by a short overview of general statistics on the foreign population. The report then turns to a more detailed review of the statistics gathered on right-wing violent crime. It next examines changes in the violence and in the German government's response to the violence since 1992. The report includes cases of violent attacks on foreigners and identifies specific problem areas that need to be addressed. The report concludes by identifying the applicable legal standards under international and national law.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

Human Rights Watch/Helsinki's investigation found that despite the progress that the German government has made during the past two years, there is an ongoing need for federal leadership to protect non-Germans living in Germany. The steps taken to date have improved the police and prosecutorial response, but are still insufficient. There is an ongoing need for political and moral leadership not only to condemn violence against non-Germans, but also to take the lead in countering the more subtle forms of racism and xenophobia that contribute to the marginalization of minority groups. Having allowed foreigners to be threatened without a forceful and immediate government response, the German authorities should take steps to emphasize that non-Germans are not only tolerated but welcome and equal members of German society. Such steps include the need for a reevaluation of numerous German laws to remove discriminatory provisions, a reevaluation of the citizenship and immigration laws, and the initiation of additional protective legislation, including an anti-discrimination law.

Human Rights Watch/Helsinki urges the government of Germany to take the following steps to protect foreigners. Recognizing the federal structure of the German government, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki directs some of these recommendations to federal officials, some to state officials, and some to both.

FEDERAL AUTHORITIES

- Guarantee the security of all persons from violence or bodily harm whether inflicted by government officials or private individuals or groups;
- Conduct a country-wide study, in cooperation with state authorities, of the failure of the local and state authorities to intervene to protect foreigners under attack. Publicize the findings of the investigation, including the identity of officers who failed to protect foreigners threatened or attacked, the disciplinary measures recommended, the disciplinary measures imposed, and the changes in procedures recommended to prevent similar failures in the future;
- Provide the political support, as well as sufficient resources, to ensure that the federal prosecutor's office can respond quickly to and supervise the prosecution of as many cases of anti-foreigner crime as are appropriate;
- Provide resources to encourage states to establish and fully staff special prosecutors' groups devoted to right-wing and xenophobic crime;
- Make clear to the general public that judges' personal sympathies for the political views or motives of a defendant are no justification for failing to apply the law in an equal and non-discriminatory manner, without regard to nationality, ethnicity, race, or political opinion;
- Continue to monitor and report the results of the prosecution of crimes against foreigners;
- Continue to monitor and report the types of sentences imposed on those convicted of committing crimes against foreigners;
- Intensify intelligence gathering, information sharing, and strategic planning to combat right-wing and xenophobic crime;
- Fulfill its obligations under Article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that "the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination" by enacting anti-discrimination legislation to protect foreigners in Germany from discrimination based on race, ethnic background, or national origin;
- Resist the temptation to exploit racial and ethnic tensions for political gains and, instead, take the lead to combat racism and to condemn violence against non-Germans.

As a matter of policy and out of concern for fairness and equity, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki also urges the German government to:

- Adopt a citizenship law that will simplify the procedure for long-term residents of Germany who wish to become citizens, including providing the option of dual citizenship;
- Amend the aliens' law to allow on humanitarian grounds long-term residents of Germany to have frequent family visits from family members living abroad;
- Increase the recruitment efforts of federal agencies and forces to attract individuals of different ethnic and national backgrounds. This is especially important in the federal border guard and in the federal agencies that routinely deal with foreigners, but it is also important in other agencies because of the message it conveys to all of German society.

STATE AUTHORITIES

- Guarantee the security of all persons from violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or private individuals or groups;

- Provide substantial additional resources to upgrade the police forces in the new federal states;
- Provide substantial additional resources to improve the training of the police forces in the new federal states;
- Provide substantial additional resources to establish and/or expand special divisions on right-wing and xenophobic crime in the law enforcement agencies of the state. The special commission in Saxony furnishes a successful model that can be replicated;
- Investigate the failure of the local and state authorities to intervene to protect foreigners under attack. Publicize the findings of the investigation, including the officers who failed to protect foreigners threatened or attacked, the disciplinary measures recommended, the disciplinary measures imposed, and the changes in procedures recommended to prevent similar failures in the future;
- Investigate the patterns of police brutality against foreigners that come to the attention of the state authorities. Publicize the findings of the investigations, including any officers guilty of brutality, the disciplinary measures recommended, the disciplinary measures imposed, and the changes in procedures recommended to prevent similar brutality in the future;
- Require police officers and other law enforcement personnel to wear name tags, badge numbers, or other insignia that allow citizens to identify the individual officers with whom they have contact;
- Prosecute to the fullest extent of the law all parties to crimes against foreigners, including accomplices and those who incite violent action, but not those who merely advocate hateful sentiments;
- Establish and staff fully special police units on right-wing and xenophobic crime, where they do not already exist;
- Establish and adequately staff special prosecutors' units on right-wing and xenophobic crime;
- Provide more adequate police training, including more professional police methods and more creative strategies for responding to right-wing crime;
- Provide special police training regarding foreigners, including programs about local conditions and political persecution faced by many asylum seekers in their home countries;
- Intensify efforts to recruit police officers from different ethnic and national backgrounds;
- Make special efforts to recruit individuals from different ethnic and national backgrounds into other state agencies, especially those that deal with foreigners.

III. A STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

FOREIGNERS IN GERMANY

The Federal Statistics Office reports that the foreign population of Germany increased by 382,000 in 1993.¹³ Almost seven million foreigners resided in Germany in 1994, constituting 8.5 percent of the population. This is a significant increase from the 7 percent of the population that was foreign in 1991.

Ninety-seven percent of the foreign population in Germany lives in the old federal states, and the whole of Berlin. Three percent, or 212,000, live in the five new federal states. Nearly two million Turkish nationals reside in Germany. Over one million nationals of the former Yugoslavia are also residents. Italians comprise the third largest group, with half a million German residents. Greek nationals follow in fourth place, with 350,000 residents in Germany.

GROWTH OF RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM

The German government has reported a phenomenal increase in right-wing and xenophobic violence in the last decade. In mid-1992, when the prior Human Rights Watch/Helsinki report was published, the government had just released statistics for 1991.¹⁴ The government reported the existence of thirty neo-Nazi groups and forty-six other right-wing groups, with a total membership of 39,800.¹⁵ These statistics showed a significant increase in right-wing extremist groups and membership over the previous year.¹⁶ The 1991 statistics for the first time included 4,200 militant right-wing skinhead extremists, who were not members of any group.¹⁷

The numbers reported by the government at the end of 1992 again showed an increase. There were thirty-three neo-Nazi groups and forty-nine other right-wing groups, with a total membership of 41,900.¹⁸ Of these 6,400 were skinhead extremists.¹⁹

The numbers remained steady in 1993. The total membership in right-wing groups was reported as 41,500. Four groups of militant skinheads appeared, with a combined membership of 5,600.²⁰ Similarly, in 1994 the number of right-wing extremists remained steady at 41,500, with 5,600 classified as militant skinheads. There were seventy-seven right-wing organizations or groups.²¹

Over the past two years, the German state and federal governments have cracked down on the activities of neo-Nazi organizations. In addition to banning several groups, there have also been numerous large-scale raids of neo-Nazi headquarters and the confiscation of weapons, propaganda and other materials that may be evidence of criminal activity. (See discussion below.)

Some German officials have also expressed concern that right-wing extremists may be regrouping and preparing for a more violent campaign. Due at least in part to the government's crackdown, right-wing groups do appear to be restructuring. According to Rhineland-Palatinate Interior Minister Walter Zuber, "Firm organizational structures are being replaced with loose autonomous groups of people who do not belong to organizations and who participate in a network with the aid of mailboxes, info telephones and mobile telephones." ²²

Gerhard Fricke, a representative of the Federal Office of Criminal Investigation (Bundeskriminalamt or "BKA"), recently expressed concern that a new right-wing terrorism may be developing. Fricke pointed out that a four volume treatise entitled "An Armed Movement" sets out a "guerrilla concept . . . on the model of the Nazi werewolves for the 'illegal fight against the state.'" According to Fricke, the terrorist instruments include "sabotage, hostage taking, and also the annihilation of human lives."²³ Some officials are also troubled by information that militant neo-Nazis are getting training as mercenaries in the former Yugoslavia and will bring their newly-acquired expertise back to Germany.

VIOLENT CRIMES AGAINST FOREIGNERS AND OTHER MINORITIES

Much of the right-wing movement embraces a racist ideology, with hatred of foreigners as a prominent feature. Consequently, an increasing number of verbal and physical attacks against those perceived to be foreign has accompanied the growth of right-wing organizations. The number of crimes with right-wing extremist motivation has steadily increased. This category includes crimes such as criminal harassment and intimidation, as well as a host of expressive activities that Human Rights Watch believes should not be criminalized. However, we do view the steady increase in such activities as troubling because it indicates continued and even growing xenophobia in some segments of German society. In 1991, the total number of right-wing crimes, both violent and non-violent, was 3,884.²⁴ There was a major increase - to 7,121 crimes - in 1992.²⁵ The statistics showed another significant increase - to 10,561 crimes - in 1993.²⁶ Of these crimes, the majority were motivated by hostility against foreigners.²⁷

The number of violent right-wing crimes also skyrocketed during the last decade. In absolute numbers, violent right-wing crime had hovered around 200 crimes per year during the late 1980s.²⁸ By the time of the last Human Rights Watch/Helsinki report, government figures for 1991 showed nearly 1,500 violent right-wing crimes.²⁹

The government's statistics released after the end of 1992 showed that physical violence by right-wing extremists continued to grow dramatically. The total number of violent attacks by right-wing extremists increased to 2,639 in 1992.³⁰ Roughly 85 percent of the violence was directed against foreigners.³¹ There were seventeen murders in 1992, compared to three in 1991. Physical assaults on persons increased from 449 to 725 in 1992. Violent attacks on property increased from 793 to 1,122.³²

The period between 1992 and 1993 showed a slight decrease in violent right-wing crimes, with the number of violent attacks totaling 2,232.³³ Roughly 75 percent of the violence was directed against foreigners.³⁴ The decline in violent crimes did not, however, bring those crimes down to the 1991 level, which itself had represented a huge increase from earlier years. Moreover, the number of nonviolent right-wing crimes showed a significant increase.³⁵

Analysis of right-wing violence in 1993 showed that the number of actual and attempted homicides increased to twenty-three; seven people were killed.³⁶ Bombings decreased to three. Arson attacks decreased to 311. Physical assaults on persons increased to 899. Violent attacks on property decreased to 903.³⁷

During the first half of 1994, there were 1,895 crimes against foreigners. There were four attempted murders, but no deaths. Two hundred and seventy-eight people were injured. There was one bombing and forty-four arson attacks.³⁸ Statistics released by the German government in January 1995 indicated that there had been 1,233 violent right-wing offenses in the first eleven months of 1994. This was a significant drop over the previous year.

ANTI-SEMITIC VIOLENCE

The number of violent anti-Semitic acts has grown steadily in recent years. In 1991 there were forty cases of violent anti-Semitic acts.³⁹ In 1992 the number of violent anti-Semitic crimes increased to sixty-five. There were 656 anti-Semitic crimes in 1993, seventy-two of which were violent.⁴⁰

In the first nine months of 1994 the Office of Criminal Investigations (Bundeskriminalamt) reported that there had already been 937 attacks directed at Jews or Jewish property, representing a 60 percent increase over the previous year. "The rise in anti-Semitic crimes while racist offenses appear to be declining backs up a warning [made by the Interior Minister Manfred Kanther] that neo-Nazi groups were increasingly turning from attacking foreigners to targeting Jews."⁴¹

Anti-Semitic crimes during 1994 included the firebombing of a synagogue in Lübeck, the first such attack on a Jewish place of worship since World War II. Several people living above the synagogue, including the cantor, barely escaped the fire without injury. In 1994, there were also over forty cases "in which Jewish cemeteries or monuments to the victims of the Nazi Holocaust were desecrated. For example, a pack of neo-Nazi skinheads rampaged through the Buchenwald death camp memorial in July [1994], shouting 'Sieg Heil' and threatening to burn a supervisor to death."⁴²

VARIATIONS WITHIN GERMANY

As the statistics gathered by the government indicate, the dramatic rise in violence against foreigners leveled off and decreased in some categories in 1993 and 1994. There are two important caveats, however. First, as Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobsen, the federal commissioner on foreigners' affairs, pointed out, the number of violent attacks fell, but it did not come close to returning to the situation prior to 1990.⁴³ Second, anti-foreigner and racist sentiments continued to be expressed in a variety of non-violent ways, such as anti-foreigner graffiti and the distribution of neo-Nazi propaganda. In fact, such incidents rose dramatically in 1993. Schmalz-Jacobsen found this development particularly troubling, because it reveals a level of xenophobia that could be the basis for future violence against foreigners.

In 1992 Human Rights Watch/Helsinki reported that, although attacks against foreigners occur frequently in the West:

[T]here is a qualitative and quantitative difference between the violence in the two parts of Germany. . . . Given that East Germans make up only twenty percent of the total German population, and that East Germany has a much lower foreigner-to-German ratio, the most serious crimes are occurring disproportionately in the East.⁴⁴

As in 1992, government statistics for 1993 and 1994 showed that in absolute numbers the western states of North Rhine-Westphalia and Baden-Württemberg recorded the largest numbers of violent anti-foreigner crimes.⁴⁵ "Three quarters of the violent crimes occurred in Western Germany, one quarter in Eastern Germany. [However,] the highest per capita rate of right-wing violence occurs in the eastern part of Germany, more specifically in Brandenburg and West Pomerania."⁴⁶ In sum, there are far fewer foreigners in the new federal states, and the population in those states tends to be significantly lower than in the original states, but the number of attacks per capita in the new states tends to be high.

Schmalz-Jacobsen commented that in her work she sees and hears about xenophobia throughout Germany. Yet, she said, "there is a qualitative difference between East and West. The anger is much more open in the East and appears to be much more widespread in the young population there."⁴⁷ Others have made similar observations. They point out that the population in the former GDR was much more isolated from foreigners. Even the relatively few contract workers that lived in the GDR prior to unification were kept separate from the German population. As a consequence, deep ignorance of foreigners, coupled with a sense of social disintegration and fear of perpetual unemployment, have been a lethal combination in some of the new federal states.⁴⁸

Almuth Berger, the commissioner of foreigners' affairs for the state of Brandenburg, emphasized that extensive ignorance, prejudice, and fear are directed at foreigners who live in the new federal states. For example, Berger noted that polls reveal that people in Brandenburg believe that 30 percent of the population of their state is foreign, when in reality foreigners make up only 1.2 percent of the population.⁴⁹ By contrast, citizens in the old federal states tend to hold less exaggerated views on the size of the foreigner population in Germany.

The violence directed against foreigners appears to vary from state to state and also according to the size of the city and the density of the population. Ernst Uhrlau, the director of the Hamburg Office to Protect the Constitution, has emphasized the difficulties of protecting against violence directed at foreigners in locations where the population is dispersed.⁵⁰ He contrasted big cities such as Hamburg, where police are more concentrated, with states like Brandenburg, where the population, asylum shelters, and the police are more spread out. If police reinforcements are needed in Hamburg, he said, they can be more easily deployed from other parts of the city. If needed somewhere in Brandenburg, the police reinforcements may be in Potsdam, thirty or more kilometers away.

This contributes, according to Uhrlau, to the fact that violent attacks against foreigners occur more often in cities with a population of 75,000 to 100,000 than in big cities like Hamburg. The larger cities also tend to be much more cosmopolitan, and the population much more used to routine encounters with non-Germans.

THE 1994 ELECTION YEAR

There was a great deal of concern among many Germans that the far right would succeed in entering the federal parliament during the many elections at both the local and national level that were held during 1994. However, in the first test of their strength in the June 1994 elections for the European Parliament, the right-wing parties fared poorly. The largest right-wing party in Germany, the Republicans, won only 3.9 percent of the vote, falling considerably below the 7.1 percent they had achieved in 1989. Having obtained less than the 5 percent minimum needed for representation, the German Republicans will have no representative in the European Parliament, thereby forfeiting the six seats they won in 1989.⁵¹

Some commentators claimed that many who had formerly voted for the Republicans had declined to do so in 1994 due to the xenophobia associated with the party and the escalation of xenophobic violence in recent years. "The murders in Mölln, in Solingen and the burning of the synagogue in Lübeck have shown Germans what they have done by voting for right-wing extremists," stated Manfred Goellner.⁵² In discussing the poor showing of the Republicans in the June elections, Schmalz-Jacobsen emphasized two parallel developments in Germany. On the one hand, she described a passive majority and a small but violent minority. On the other, she described a growing anti-racist movement. This movement expresses itself not only in demonstrations and candle-light vigils, but also through social support, education, tutoring, and other activities designed to combat xenophobia and to assist foreigners. Schmalz-Jacobsen believes that anti-racist activities contributed to the poor showing of the Republicans in the 1994 election.

IV. CASES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST FOREIGNERS

Statistics and discussions by experts are important, but they can be cold and abstract. Victims of violent attacks, and witnesses to violence and intimidation, convey much more vividly the reality of the extreme hostility to foreigners that exists in Germany. The following case studies range from the notorious to the unreported, from major assaults involving multiple murders to individual instances of harassment and abuse. They are only a few of the many such reports that Human Rights Watch/Helsinki has received.

BRUTAL ATTACKS AGAINST MULTIPLE VICTIMS

· In November 1994, a black African asylum seeker living in Magdeburg reported that he, along with three other black Africans who were on their way to the asylum home, were attacked by five young men with very short hair, wearing "bomber" jackets and combat boots. One of the assailants cut the victim several times with a broken bottle and caused him to be hospitalized. Jens-Martin Laugner, a local minister who works with asylum seekers in Magdeburg, stated, "It may sound cynical, but this is a very normal case for us."⁵³

· On April 20, 1994, five pupils ages fourteen to seventeen-years-old threw a handmade fire bomb into the home of a Turkish guestworker in the Senne neighborhood in Bielefeld. At the time of the fire, which completely burned the top floor of the house, thirteen people were in the house. All of the residents were able to escape without injury.⁵⁴

· A month earlier, literally on the eve of Passover, March 25, 1994, firebombs ignited the synagogue in Lübeck, a port city in Schleswig

Holstein, one of the original federal states. The synagogue had been destroyed in the 1938 *Kristallnacht* terror, and had just been rebuilt. For the first time since *Kristallnacht*, the twenty-seven-member Jewish community of Lübeck was looking forward to celebrating a Passover seder in the building.^{[55](#)}

Two Molotov cocktails burned down the synagogue's meeting hall.^{[56](#)} Luckily, neighbors saw the flames, called the fire department, and the fire was contained. Officials emphasized, "Ten minutes later the devastation would have been enormous."^{[57](#)}

The first firebombing of a synagogue in Germany since *Kristallnacht*,^{[58](#)} this attack posed a serious threat to human life. The synagogue's cantor and seven other people lived in the apartments above the synagogue.^{[59](#)} "Because the building was inhabited, there is no way the arsonists could have ruled out the possibility of murder," said investigating officials.^{[60](#)}

· Lethal violence occurred on October 29, 1993, in Oberhof, a town in Eastern Germany where winter athletes train. Five members of the U.S. luge team were celebrating a teammate's birthday when one of the team members, an African-American, became the target of skinhead hostility and insults. "Nazi Power!" yelled one. A crowd of fifteen skinheads gathered, began making monkey sounds and movements, and yelled, "Nigger out! Nigger out!"^{[61](#)}

A local patron of the bar told the Americans they should leave, which they did, but the skinheads chased after them. Duncan Kennedy held off the gang while Robert Pipkins, the African-American, and the other team members ran to their hotel. Kennedy was kicked and beaten as he blocked the skinheads from following the others up the stairs: "My first thought was that they were going to kill Rob. They would have if they had caught him. No question."^{[62](#)} Kennedy received a concussion, bruised ribs, and a battered nose.^{[63](#)}

· Solingen, a city of 170,000 located near Cologne in the Western part of Germany, was the scene of horrifying violence and death in the early morning hours of May 29, 1993. Neighbors woke to terrified screams and saw flames racing through a house owned by the Genc family.^{[64](#)} They saw a young woman with a child in her arms silhouetted against the flames she was unsuccessfully trying to escape. There were "bone-chilling screams and then silence, just the noise of the flames."^{[65](#)}

Five people died. Four were sisters: Saime Genc, 5; Hulia Genc, 9; Hatice Genc, 18; Gulfun Ince, 27; the fifth, Gulistan Yuksel, was a 12-year-old visitor from Turkey. Eight others were injured in the fire, including two small children hospitalized in critical condition. Fourteen others inside the building barely escaped injury.^{[66](#)}

The Genc family had lived in Solingen for fifteen years. Their youngest children were born and had lived their whole lives in Germany.^{[67](#)} They owned their own home. Outside their house, fresh swastikas were painted on nearby buildings and scratched in the dirt.^{[68](#)}

· On November 23, 1992, two buildings housing Turkish families in Mölln, a town near Hamburg, were firebombed. Screams for help awakened the neighbors, who saw people jumping from the windows.^{[69](#)} Someone telephoned the Mölln fire department, announced the fire, shouted "Heil Hitler," and hung up. The firefighters could not get there in time to save the victims.

Three people were killed: Bahide Arslan, who died shielding a grandson from smoke; her 10-year-old granddaughter, Yeliz Arslan; and Ayse Yilmaz, a 14-year-old girl visiting from Turkey. Of the forty-five people in the buildings at the time, nine others, ranging in age from eighty-two years to nine months, were injured.

VIOLENT ASSAULTS AGAINST INDIVIDUALS

· During one weekend in October 1994, right-wing extremists attacked numerous victims in Berlin. For example, four youths reportedly between sixteen and twenty years of age attacked a Nigerian man, kicking him repeatedly and stabbing him with a knife in the Berlin neighborhood of Friedrichshain. In Schöneberg, two neo-Nazis, ages forty-five and fifty-three, attacked a Tamil florist who then fled into a nearby Turkish snack-bar. The neo-Nazis then prevented the owner from escaping the bar and gave the Hitler salute.^{[70](#)}

· In mid-September 1994, four young men beat up a Ghanaian man and threw him out of the S-bahn (a commuter train). The victim was found the next day on the train tracks. In addition to a skull fracture, the victim's lower leg had been run over by a train and had to be amputated. An eighteen year old, who was arrested for the crime, confessed to having attacked the asylum seeker from Ghana with three of his friends.^{[71](#)}

· Alino Kriso-Yasufye, a young asylum seeker from Chad, left a disco in Halle when it closed early in the morning of May 20, 1994.⁷² As he did, he was attacked by a group of men. He didn't know what had triggered the attack, but he saw twenty to thirty people who had just left the disco standing around and cheering his assailants on. As they were trampling him, the assailants shouted "Sieg Heil!" Some bystanders shouted, "Knock the nigger flat!"⁷³ "Beat him up!"⁷⁴

A young German woman tried to help the victim. "Why are you doing this?" she demanded. "Because they are sub-human," was the response.⁷⁵ As Birgit Königsheim tried to protect the victim, she was punched and knocked to the ground. She heard a man shout, "Hit the dirty nigger in the head with a brick." No one else intervened.⁷⁶

· An African asylum seeker assigned to the asylum center in Burg described a harrowing experience that occurred on Good Friday, April 1, 1994.⁷⁷ A little after midnight he was at the Jungle Club disco with several friends. A group of young German men pushed and shoved the Africans, who hurriedly left the disco.

They followed us. They also pursued us in a Trabant car. Suddenly the car pulled behind me. Turning back to look while in flight, one of the guys pulled out a pistol and shot at me over the window of the car. Luck was on my side that the bullet flew over my eyes without entering. It touched the surface of my eye, with the gas in my eyes and in my nose. As I couldn't see and was being choked by the gas, I held a pole by the road and they in turn advanced on me. They beat me to their liking.

When I came to, I heard a very faint tone. [Two guys led me toward home, but] they left me when the German boys advanced again. I tried to stop moving cars but they all ignored me. . . .

Having got at me, they advanced on me again with a series of beatings, kicks, and what have you. I knelt down and started begging them with all manner of pleading. At this, the big guy who serves as their boss came and shook my hand and asked me to go. . . . Thereafter I was able to stagger home. . . . At the gate the watchman took me over to the chief of the house who [called a doctor and an] ambulance.⁷⁸

· A young man from French-speaking Africa had a similar experience in Magdeburg in May 1994.⁷⁹

I was in the city when I was insulted by a group of young men. They said, "Nigger, why are you here?" I tried to run away. They hit me on the neck with a rock. My neck was swollen and I needed medical attention. I spent three days in the hospital.⁸⁰ I had a lot of pain. I still have a neck brace and need medicine now six weeks later.

DAILY HARASSMENT AND INTIMIDATION

Although the shocking incidents that are reported in newspaper headlines and television broadcasts are frequent enough, they are greatly outnumbered by small-scale attacks on individuals such as those described above. There are even more incidents of harassment and provocation that occur on a daily basis. The daily harassment and discrimination may not be "shocking" enough to attract regular media attention, but it creates a general atmosphere of fear and uncertainty for the non-ethnic German population. A few examples follow:

· An asylum seeker from Africa described an incident in Magdeburg on June 27, 1994.⁸¹

Just as we left the office, four grown men in a car threw a can of beer at us. They yelled, "Ausländer raus! Nigger! Get out! Fuck you!" This happens every day. It is endless. Some drive very close to us and go up on the curb to try to run us down.

· A young man from French-speaking Africa who lives at the asylum center in Burg described a pattern of harassment.⁸²

Every day on the train people signal with their hand that they want to shoot you. They make a gun shape and point their finger at you to show they want to kill you.

· Tawo Dable, an asylum seeker from Togo, described similar problems in Schwerin.⁸³

The German people, 90 percent of them, don't like foreigners. People just start laughing at us, calling us names. "Schwarze. Nigger." You can't

go to a night club because skinheads are there and they can kill you.

· Ali Goudarzi, an Iranian who has been granted asylum in Germany, commented that he had had many problems with skinheads in Schwerin in 1993 and 1994.[84](#)

They came into my apartment building, wrote "SS" on my mailbox, and broke it. Two months later, they broke the lock on my car and wrote "SS" on it. Then about eight months ago I found a bullet shot into my window. I didn't report these to the police because each time I thought it was just a single young person.

Then seven months ago there was a note in my mailbox: "Scheiß Ausländer Raus." [shitty foreigners- get out] I got scared and went to the police. They said they could do nothing. A month later my car lights were broken, "SS" was written on the motor, and someone put a picture of a skull and cross bones on my car. Now I'm very scared. I have three locks. When I go home, I'm always careful and I run inside.

I see many other problems with the asylum seekers I work with. Everyone is so fearful that they can't leave their apartments after 8:00 P.M. It's like being in prison.

· Richardson Joseph, a South African who has been a legal resident in Germany for years, first in the former GDR and now in the new federal states, has an unusual perspective on the daily acts that create the atmosphere of intimidation.[85](#) He fled South Africa to escape the apartheid at home, and now works to assist victims of racism and discrimination in Germany. He has experienced harassment and oppression directed at black people both in South Africa and in Germany. He commented on the seemingly mundane matter of commuting to work in Magdeburg by bicycle.

First, there were shouts from cars. Then spitting. Then trying to hurt or kill me. I have given up riding my bicycle and am getting a driver's license again.

[Before unification] we could walk freely at night with no concern what area we were in. Now we can't do that. We must be very careful and have our antennae out for danger ahead and behind. . . .

Last year I went to South Africa for the first time in sixteen years. My wife and I, a mixed couple, walked around freely. We went everywhere, and no one seemed to notice. It was as if it had always been that way. It was amazing. Here in Magdeburg, my wife and I don't go out and just walk around. We go in our car, and we have a destination. . . . We think about it ahead of time. We don't just walk around our neighborhood or around town. We usually travel by car. There are a lot of Nazis in our area.

The atmosphere of intimidation is not a phenomenon limited to the eastern portion of Germany. Daily harassment and discrimination also occur in the West.

· Abubakar Akumfi-Ameyaw, a Ghanaian journalist and cameraman who has lived in Germany for twelve years, gave examples from his personal experience in Bremen and Düsseldorf.[86](#)

. . . I was looking for a house in Düsseldorf with my German girlfriend. The landlord told us: "I'll give this room to a German with a dog before I give it to you and a black man."

More recently, in the early summer of 1994 I bought a new telephone card and went to the post office in Düsseldorf to call Ghana. When the call did not go through, I came out of the booth, but forgot my card. Several other people in line used the phone booth before I realized I had forgotten my card. I went to a man who works at that post office and asked if he had found my card. He said, "You dumb nigger, I can't help it if you forgot your card. The train station is not made for you. Only for the Germans."

I've been in Germany for more than twelve years. The hostility to foreigners is worse now than before. Now there are many more serious attacks. I'm afraid to go out, especially late at night.

· Maria Uyaner, a German in Düsseldorf who is married to a Turk, works for Düsseldorfer Appell, an emergency telephone line for victims of

racism.⁸⁷ She commented on some of her recent experiences:

We had problems before, but not daily as we do now. I talk to a lot of foreigners through my work and most say things are worse now than they were ten years ago. There is more acknowledgment now of the problems and discrimination faced by foreigners, but now more lines are drawn. There is more support for us, but there is more open discrimination, too. For example, my landlord no longer will rent to foreigners. Although he has rented to foreigners for years without any problems, he now will rent only to Germans. He said he doesn't want to be the target of any violence against foreigners.

The landlord is not alone in this reasoning. Agrippina Insurance Company recently notified a church group in Hamburg that it was canceling fire insurance on a home for ethnic German settlers from Eastern Europe.⁸⁸ The rationale: there is a greater risk of arson attacks in neighborhoods where asylum homes are located. A more blatant example of punishing the victims of violence is hard to imagine, yet protests to the insurance company did not change this decision.⁸⁹

V. THE POLICE RESPONSE TO XENOPHOBIC VIOLENCE SINCE 1992

The 1992 Human Rights Watch/Helsinki report identified serious problems with police protection of foreigners and concluded that the police failed in four different aspects of their work: to intervene to protect foreigners who were being attacked, to investigate crimes against foreigners, to curb police discrimination against foreigners, and to combat police brutality. By 1994, there had been improvements in some of these areas of police conduct. For example, after solving only 8 percent of xenophobic crimes in 1993, police reportedly improved their success rate to 30 percent in 1994.⁹⁰ However, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki also found that many of the problems identified in 1992 persist in many locales.

The 1992 report noted that the failure of the police to provide adequate protection to foreigners appeared to occur more frequently in the eastern part of the country than in the West.

The police in East Germany have been unable or unwilling to guarantee the safety of foreigners living within their jurisdiction. The shocking failure of the police in Rostock to intervene when Vietnamese were trapped in a burning building is only the most recent in a long series of police failures to protect foreigners in danger.⁹¹

This pattern has remained the same. A comparison of the arson attack in Rostock in August 1992⁹² with those in Mölln in November 1992 and Solingen in May 1993 is revealing. Although hooligans with murderous intent set out to injure and destroy foreigners in all three cities, the police response varied greatly.

In Rostock, a city in Eastern Germany, the police arrived late, were unprepared, and withdrew at a crucial point, leaving the victims unprotected from a skinhead mob. The police did not ensure that firefighters could approach the building to put out the fire. By contrast, no such complaints were heard in the western cities of Mölln and Solingen, where firefighters and the police forces responded quickly, and immediately began to put out the fires, save lives, and search for the criminals involved.

The contrast between inadequate police work in the East and good police work in the West is striking. Accordingly, much of the discussion that follows of the police's failure to protect foreigners focuses on the new federal states that were part of the GDR prior to unification. Police work in the old federal states is by no means perfect, however. The police abuses tend to take a different form and typically do not result in a failure to respond to foreigners' appeals for protection.

THE POLICE FAILURE TO INTERVENE

Magdeburg, May 1994

On May 12, 1994, the Ascension Day holiday in Germany, gangs of neo-Nazis deployed through the streets of Magdeburg "hunting foreigners." At least five asylum seekers from Africa were the unlucky targets. Beaten with iron bars and stabbed, they fled to a nearby Turkish-owned cafe.⁹³ The assailants raced after them, destroying windows and smashing furniture in the cafe, and shouting "Germany for the Germans! Foreigners Out!"

A young asylum seeker from Africa was in Magdeburg that afternoon. He told Human Rights Watch/Helsinki that he and a friend were listening to a group playing music when:^{[94](#)}

Suddenly two German men came up and insulted us and told us to leave, shouting "Germany is for Germans." One man tried to hit one of my black friends. I realized it was dangerous and left the area. We now were six or seven black fellows walking away. The German men followed us. I said, "You asked us to leave. Why are you following us?" "Germany is for Germans" was the response.

Just then a streetcar came by and fifty hooligans got off. They crossed the traffic, went down to the park, and started beating up any foreigners they could find. They overpowered us. We scattered. Some foreigners ran to the Marietta-Bar, followed by hooligans. It had been about half an hour since the hooligans got off the streetcar. There were no police around.

The hooligans started dragging the foreigners in the Marietta-Bar. They began to destroy it.

Under attack, patrons of the cafe grabbed knives to defend themselves. They stabbed four assailants. After the thugs left the cafe, they and others roamed the streets for hours, committing acts of violence until late in the night.^{[95](#)}

Public reaction to the Magdeburg violence was one of horror. "Human beings are being hunted down as they were in the worst times of the SA," said Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobsen. This is a "new and horrifying high point" in violence against foreigners.^{[96](#)}

Without a doubt, the riots in Magdeburg on May 12, 1994, were horrifying. More frightening still was the police response. It is clear that the police had advance warning that there would be violence-prone right-wing extremists in Magdeburg on that day. Ernst Uhrlau, director of the Hamburg Office to Protect the Constitution, confirmed that law enforcement sources in Magdeburg had been alerted to expect violence on May 12.^{[97](#)} Nonetheless, there was no increased police presence in Magdeburg as the gangs of thugs grew from fifty in the afternoon to over 150 by night.^{[98](#)}

When the police finally responded, it was too little and too late. Eyewitnesses reported that it took over half an hour for the police to respond after hooligans began beating foreigners.^{[99](#)} The owner of the restaurant that was destroyed by the neo-Nazis, Arab Oetzbay, emphasized: "The police definitely showed up too late."^{[100](#)} When the police responded, too few came. Only thirty police officers were sent to the scene.^{[101](#)} By the time 150 reinforcements arrived, it was late at night.^{[102](#)}

More serious than their late arrival and their small numbers was the police response at the scene. Instead of arresting those who had attacked foreigners, the police initially arrested the victims. Many asylum seekers escaped the neo-Nazis only to be forced by the police to spend the night in jail.^{[103](#)} An employee in the Marietta-Bar who had just reported for work described what he saw:

I opened the door to the restaurant and saw the plate glass display window shatter. Old women and children ran from the terrace into the inside of the cafe looking for shelter. This all happened in seconds. At this moment four or five black Africans ran into the cafe . . . perhaps to flee through the rear exit. Suddenly I saw three Turkish and Algerian asylum seekers hiding behind the ice cream stand in front of the restaurant. . . I called them, but at this moment a Nazi came at me and tried to hit me on the head with a bottle. I instinctively put my hand out. The bottle slid past my head and broke on the floor.

[After trying to chase the Nazi away and getting beaten up myself, I returned] to the restaurant. At this moment I saw five or six police cars arrive between the Marietta-Bar and McDonald's. As I got to the kitchen of the restaurant, a policeman, who was about two to three meters behind me, ordered: "Hands up." I had my hands pulled behind me; then he put on the handcuffs and tightened them so much that my hands got swollen and still hurt me ten days later. Then he led me away, pulling me so hard on my upper arm that blood was gushing there for a long time. . . .

When we reached the street car tracks, two Nazis came up to us and hit me in the head and on the back, so that I was knocked to the ground. I tried to protect my head behind the legs of the policemen. Then I was taken to a police van.

Furthermore, the police work was incredibly sloppy. No videotapes were taken to show which assailants had been involved in which attacks.^{[104](#)} The forty-eight neo-Nazis ultimately detained were all released without being charged. These people were all "known to us," said a police spokesman. "They were drunk and obviously wanted to chase foreigners."^{[105](#)}

By contrast, the foreigners were "not known" to the police, yet they were treated like criminals. A young asylum seeker from Algeria described to Human Rights Watch/Helsinki how he was attacked by skinheads and then by the police.^{[106](#)}

On the 12th of May around 4 P.M. I was in the center of the city. A big car stopped, with many men carrying baseball bats, bottles, and other weapons. They ran toward the park, shouting, "Foreigners out! Foreigners are shit! This is our country!" They kept hitting all the foreigners they could find. They especially attacked the Africans, but also all the other foreigners. I tried to get away. . .

After about fifteen minutes the police came and started beating me. They didn't ask me anything. They handcuffed me, put me and another man into a car, and took us to the police station. They kept us there with nothing to eat or drink. I kept telling them to let me go. They took me to see the prosecutor. They took pictures of me. At 5 A.M. they finally let me go. They told me to go home.

Similarly, another asylum seeker from Africa told Human Rights Watch/Helsinki:

All of a sudden I heard a noise behind me. I thought it was a holiday crowd. The crowd came closer fast. I tried to run away. All of a sudden I was kicked from behind. A man grabbed my hand. It was a cop. I asked, "Why?" He didn't answer. He forced me to the ground. I didn't resist and went straight to the ground. He held me there for five to ten minutes. Another cop came and arrested me and another foreigner. He did a body search of me. They never said why they arrested me. He kicked the other foreigner between the legs. They took me in a car to the police station.

At the station they locked me up for two hours. They made me strip naked. They never told me why I was there. Then they took me to another police station. They put me in a big cell with about fourteen other foreigners. There were no chairs, no benches; we had to stand or sit on the floor. I was in severe pain due to the kick in my back. I asked to see a doctor. They said one would come soon, but none ever did. I asked for a blanket, but was told there were no more.

About midnight questioning began. We were called out of the cell one at a time, asked why we had been arrested, and what had happened. Sometime around 1 or 2 A.M. I was questioned for about twenty minutes. I asked again for a doctor. After the last person had been questioned and returned to the cell, they released us in a group. This was around 5 A.M.^{[107](#)}

A report by the German news weekly *Der Spiegel* raised questions about the police response and their tendency to diminish the seriousness of the crimes committed.

The delayed response by the police and justice officials to anti-foreigner youths in Magdeburg . . . is no isolated case. The great majority of the approximately 150 violent offenders who brutally attacked foreigners are already familiar to the authorities and apparently have already participated in innumerable similar incidents. A police official stated: "We have known the majority for years." [According to official police files,] some of them even since 1991. At that time right-wing radicals attacked several Turks, who were sleeping in their cars near Magdeburg. One Turk suffered life-threatening burns and injuries to his head. Neither the police nor the prosecutor's office made the crime public. Up to now, no date has been set for the trial of the perpetrators, whose identity has been known since September 1991. . . . Last Ascension Day, youths literally hunted down Africans. Many people were injured, some of them severely. Of the forty-nine persons initially detained only one remained in police custody, because an arrest warrant had been issued against her for another crime. According to Antonius Stockmann, Magdeburg's chief of police, the rest were released because of the "confusing situation" on the day of the incident. He downplayed the importance of the xenophobic background of the brutal attacks: "The role of the sun and alcohol was much greater."^{[108](#)}

Halle, May 1994

Only weeks after the attacks in Magdeburg, violence also erupted in Halle. The police response again was shockingly inadequate. As described earlier,^{[109](#)} an asylum seeker from Chad was attacked and beaten outside a disco in Halle on Saturday evening, May 21, 1994. The one German woman who tried to help him was also beaten.

The police arrived shortly after the attack, but did nothing. Birgit Königsheim, the woman who tried to intervene, was shocked: "The police got there one minute after the attack, but they did not arrest the people that I identified to them. That really astounded me."^{[110](#)}

In fact, the police did worse. They denied that they had seen any of the assailants, and instead reported that the attackers had fled unidentified.

Several days later, after a public outcry, the police admitted that they had stopped the alleged assailants and then let them go.¹¹¹ They traced the suspects to a neighborhood bar, but failed to block the rear exit, through which the suspects escaped. The police identified the suspects as right-wing sympathizers, and the owner of the neighborhood bar as a friend of the German League, a right-wing organization.¹¹²

Police officials again sought to down play the incident. A spokesperson for the police stated that the police had made "tactical mistakes." They had not tried to "hush up" the incident, but had "merely failed to get a handle on the situation."¹¹³

Although the police failures to intervene in the violence described above received press coverage, there are thousands of daily incidents of harassment and violence that are never reported in the news. In many of these less sensational attacks on foreigners, the police also fail to respond in a prompt manner. An encounter in downtown Magdeburg in June 1994 is typical.

Magdeburg, June 1994

On June 16, 1994, an African asylum seeker was standing in the main train station in Magdeburg at about 12:30 P.M. waiting for a train back to Burg.¹¹⁴

Suddenly some Nazis came up from the subway, first a few of them, and then ten or more. They shouted, "Hey, Nigger," and poured a bottle of beer on my head.

There was no one around, but I saw a policeman, who was watching me and doing nothing. I walked toward him and then four more police came up. I told them in English, showed them my head and my bag, all covered with beer. I identified the man who had done it. The police chatted in a friendly way with the German man and did nothing.

The asylum seeker drew an obvious conclusion:

It's no use to go to the police. I missed my train. All I got out of this was a three-hour wait for the next train. There's no way I'll go to the police in the future.

Buchenwald, July 1994

In response to a skinhead rampage through the Buchenwald concentration camp in July 1994, Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobsen criticized the police for their weak response to right-wing attacks. She remarked that "[i]t is striking how often the police were not there when their presence was required," and observed that in the prior weeks there had been "an unbearable concentration of slip-ups at individual police stations."

The fact that the video unit was simply not present during incidents like the one in Buchenwald, where the police lost sight of a bus carrying right-wing extremists, and during xenophobic riots, like the ones in Magdeburg, cannot be tolerated any longer. [According to Schmalz-Jacobsen,] the governments of the Länder [states] are "urgently required to sensitize the police to a greater extent with regard to right-wing violent criminals."¹¹⁵

In a letter to the state government, Gerd Schuchardt, head of the Social Democratic Party's parliamentary group in the Thüringen state parliament, observed that the police response to the attack had been "a high point in a long series of failures by the security forces" and pointed out that "four years after the formation of the state of Thüringen, 20 percent of all police guards had not yet completed the basic training on [appropriate] police conduct in a state ruled by law."¹¹⁶

Rostock: The Parliamentary Investigation

The official response during the August 1992 violence in Rostock is perhaps the most vivid example of the failure of the German police to provide adequate protection for foreigners. Following two days of violence by right-wing skinheads in front of an asylum shelter, 200 asylum seekers, mainly Romanian Gypsies, had to be evacuated on August 24, 1992. However, approximately 150 Vietnamese contract workers who lived in a building next to the shelter were not moved.

That evening the police protecting the building withdrew to a nearby hill, giving skinheads gathered nearby the opportunity to throw Molotov cocktails and storm the building. During the next two hours, the Vietnamese, as well as some German journalists, were trapped in the burning building while the police watched from a distance. The police moved in only after the foreigners had escaped on their own to safety.

The parliament of the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern established a special commission to investigate the events in Rostock. In 1993, the commission issued a report concluding that serious police failures had contributed to the violence and its aftermath.^{[117](#)}

As discussed above, the police response was clearly inadequate. Only thirty police officers responded on Saturday, August 22, 1992, and they were easily overwhelmed by the 300 or more right-wing demonstrators.^{[118](#)} There appeared to be major miscommunication between the police in Rostock and their superiors in Schwerin, the state capital. This was compounded by an unwillingness by police officials and political leaders to treat the situation as a life-threatening emergency. For example, Dr. Wolfgang Richter, the commissioner of foreigners' affairs in Rostock who was himself trapped in the building, called the Rostock police and pleaded for more police protection. He was told that only the minister of the interior could request reinforcements from the federal border guards, and that he could not be reached on a Saturday night.

The crowd of rioters and bystanders swelled immensely on August 23. Reinforcements were called in, and more than 300 police officers from other cities were in place in Rostock by the late afternoon. Inexplicably, on Monday evening, the police were removed from the vicinity of the building that housed the Vietnamese. Shortly thereafter, the mob moved in again, entered and vandalized the building, and set the fire that trapped and nearly killed over 100 people. Although the firefighters came relatively quickly, the police did not protect them from the crowd, and they were, therefore, unable to approach the flames.

Lothar Kupfer, the state minister of the interior, was dismissed in February 1993, but officially his dismissal was not related to the events in Rostock. Siegfried Kordus, the chief of police at the time of the violence, was promoted to director of the State Office of Criminal Investigations. Klaus Kilimann, the mayor of Rostock at the time of the violence, was forced to resign in November 1993, after the parliamentary report concluded that Kiliman had failed to fulfill his responsibilities to the city.^{[119](#)}

There have been no major incidents of violence against foreigners in Rostock since 1992, so it is difficult to assess whether the willingness of the police to protect foreigners has improved during the past two years. Some who work with refugees and other foreigners in Rostock think that the police and other authorities have become more sensitive to the problems foreigners face.^{[120](#)} They say that since 1992 the senior levels of the police have seemed more aware of violence and discrimination against foreigners and have been more cooperative in dealing with foreigners. Others, including some of the Vietnamese living in Rostock, feel that there have not been broad changes at the senior levels of the police.^{[121](#)}

POLICE FAILURE TO INVESTIGATE

Burg

Human Rights Watch/Helsinki received many reports that police are often loath to mount serious investigations into crimes against foreigners. For example, an African asylum seeker was assaulted and beaten on April 1, 1994, in the town of Burg.^{[122](#)} The injuries he sustained during the beating required hospitalization. Police follow-up was erratic.

The police asked if I could identify the man. I said yes. The police said they would come pick me up on Friday morning and then give me an appointment for Saturday. I waited all Friday and Saturday, but the police never came . . . About a month later, I made a written statement. They said they would come back, but they have not come [in the six weeks] since.

Magdeburg

Similarly, an asylum seeker from Africa was attacked on his way to Magdeburg.^{[123](#)}

I was going to the city on a bicycle. A group of boys in a car came up. The one in the front threw beer at me. I said, "Why?" He said, "Fuck you!" I dropped my bicycle.

A German lady was there. I pointed at her and then at them so she could see this. She said to them, "You're not acting right." The man said, "If

you talk, I'll shoot you." He pulled a gun. The license plate had the last three numbers covered. . . . I came home and reported this to the police. They said, "Sorry, there's nothing we can do."

This lack of interest in protecting foreigners is typical. Many foreigners point out that thugs often abuse foreigners when no witnesses are present. In this instance, however, a cooperative witness was available, as well as some identifying evidence about the vehicle involved. Nevertheless, there was no police investigation. Not surprisingly, after incidents like this, many foreigners conclude that the police are essentially unavailable to protect them against crime and decide it is not worthwhile to report harassment and violence to the police.

Rostock

The report prepared by the parliamentary commission, which investigated the 1992 events in Rostock, identified inadequate investigatory work as one of the deficiencies of the Rostock police in 1992.¹²⁴ More than one hundred criminal charges were lodged against right-wing extremists, and many suspects were arrested, but a large number of the proceedings were dismissed due to inadequate police work. As a result, many who attacked the Vietnamese were never punished.¹²⁵

POLICE BRUTALITY AGAINST FOREIGNERS

In addition to reports of police inaction in the face of violent attacks on foreigners, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki received numerous reports of police mistreatment of foreigners. A few of the complaints are described below.

· In August 1993, Vietnamese men were assaulted by police officers at the police station in the town of Bernau. One of the victims reported that:

We had to undress and were beaten by ten policemen. Then we were brought into one room where we had to line up against the wall with our faces to the wall. The policemen hit us in passing over and over again. Then we had to make faces and the police took pictures of us (not just our faces but our entire bodies).

I wore a Buddhist amulet containing ashes (a type of good luck charm) which the police ripped off my neck and broke. The police believed it contained narcotics and, therefore, beat me more brutally than the others. After two men were released, several policemen threw me down the stairs. I later complained about the treatment by the police to some kind of official and an interpreter.¹²⁶ We looked for my identity papers and found them in a trash can.¹²⁷

· Another Vietnamese man reported that he was arrested in Bernau in 1993 and in 1994.¹²⁸

We were taken down to the station and brought to a room where we were forced to undress. One of the policemen put on leathergloves. We were beaten and kicked all over by two policemen. The beatings lasted about twenty minutes. I was later forced to sign a statement saying that I had been arrested with twenty (rather than eight, the actual figure) cartons of cigarettes. I received a fine from customs later on for more than DM 1,000, which I paid in monthly installments.

[A year later] I was arrested by the same policeman in the same way as the last time. I had no cigarettes on me at the time. I was brought down to the station and put into the same room as before where I was forced to undress. Again, I was beaten (with leather gloves) and kicked all over my body. This lasted half an hour. For one month I had pain in my left cheek. Also, as a result of the beating, one of my teeth was chipped.

· Yet another Vietnamese man described similar mistreatment by the police in Bernau in March 1994.¹²⁹ He reported that he was in downtown Bernau with his girlfriend.

Suddenly, two uniformed policemen approached, arrested, and handcuffed us. They brought us down to the station, where they soon released my girlfriend. The policemen questioned me about my presence in Bernau since I was not registered in Berlin. He then took away my residence papers and forced me to undress. He beat me for approximately fifteen minutes and kicked me in the shins with his boots. I suffered hemorrhages and bruises and was in great pain for a long time.

· Human Rights Watch/Helsinki also received numerous reports of abusive police conduct in Halle. Many foreigners complained that the police illegally searched their apartments, used excessive force, and left their apartments in total disarray, with cash and other items missing.^{[130](#)}

· Foreigners in the city of Berlin report widespread racism among the police, which often results in police abuse and mistreatment of non-Germans. In July 1994, the state minister of justice, Maria Peschel-Gutzeit, reported that there were twenty-six criminal investigations under way of Berlin police officials for having allegedly abused Vietnamese cigarette dealers.^{[131](#)} In October, the minister of the interior for Berlin, Dieter Heckemann, reported that "forty-six of its police officers are being investigated in connection with accusations of causing bodily harm and of receiving stolen goods Twelve of the officers have been suspended from duty."^{[132](#)}

· In July 1994, a police officer in the city of Leipzig was sentenced to four years of imprisonment for having beaten Vietnamese immigrants and one German with a club, having misused tear gas [Reizgas] and having robbed one in the summer of 1993.

· "In Hamburg, two police officers were convicted and fined for beating a forty-four-year-old Senegalese man who was wearing a hat with a sticker reading, 'Don't give Nazis a chance.'"^{[133](#)}

On September 12, 1994, Hamburg's minister of the interior, Werner Hackmann, resigned from office in protest against a growing number of racist attacks by police in the Hamburg police force. Hackmann stated that he could no longer control his officers and that the police in Hamburg had developed a pack mentality.^{[134](#)}

The next day, on September 13, twenty-seven police officers in Hamburg were suspended for having allegedly attacked foreigners, three of whom were also accused of having contact with right-wing groups. Hackmann stated that he had "not believed it possible to what extent the police have attacked foreigners."^{[135](#)}

As of March 1995, eighty police officers in Hamburg were being investigated for having mistreated and abused detained foreigners. Investigators have been conducting an investigation for almost five months. Their chief witness, himself a police officer, has reportedly testified that most of the victims are black. The witness has reportedly also testified that when police discovered that a detained black African possessed a can of teargas, they locked the man in a cell with five other black Africans. The police then sprayed the full can of teargas into the cell and left the detainees in a cloud of gas. In another case of psychological torture and humiliation, two police officers had carried out a fake execution of a black detainee. The victim was allowed to smoke a last cigarette, after which one of the policemen held a pistol to his forehead, while the other officer shot his gun into the air. According to the police witness, "the nigger just about pissed and shit in his pants." Although a parliamentary investigatory commission has been established, it is not expected to release its findings until after the fall of 1995.

· In mid-July 1994, in Lüneberg, two police officers were convicted and sentenced to jail for having detained a Russian asylum seeker, placed him in handcuffs and driven him to a forest where they beat him.

· Nadir Watad, an Israeli student living near Hannover, was hospitalized with bruises to the head after being thrown on the floor, beaten and kicked in the head by five police officers in mid-July 1994. The police officers apparently became angry after Watad complained that the five men, whom he did not realize were police officers, were making too much noise and were disturbing the neighbors. The three main police officers have been suspended from duty and are currently awaiting trial.^{[136](#)}

· A.Z., a Kurdish man who came to Germany in 1979 to join members of his family, described an unprovoked beating by the police in Berlin.^{[137](#)} A legal resident of Germany, A.Z. was stunned by the attack.

I spent the night of September 25-26, 1993, with three men friends at the home of one of them. We drank a lot. Around daylight I decided to go home by car. On the way home, the axle of my car broke. I tried to repair the car, but couldn't. . . . My house was five to ten minutes away, so I went home to get my wife. . . .

I came back with my wife. Two police officers were waiting and ran toward me and restrained me by the arms. They accused me of causing an accident and leaving the scene. I denied this and explained the car had broken down. The police called me a liar and said the car was okay. I gave them the keys and he tried to drive it away, but couldn't.

They took me away, leaving my wife at the car. My wife asked where they were taking me. "To the hospital," the police replied. They took me

to the police station. Inside the police station, they started to hit me. They broke my finger, gashed my hand, gave me two black eyes, and left me with a swollen face. I called for help, but no one came. I was taken further into the station and saw two other police officers. I told them, "They beat me. I want to make a complaint. You can see what happened. Didn't you hear me call for help?" They responded that they couldn't do anything. I asked for their police badge numbers, but they refused. I said, "If you don't give me your numbers, I won't leave." They still wouldn't give them.

They called a doctor to check my alcohol level. She saw my condition and my swollen hands. I asked her to help me get to the hospital. She said, "Sorry, I can't help you." Neither the doctor nor the police officers wore name tags.

I left the police station and took a taxi to the hospital. At the hospital they said my finger was broken and would take four to five weeks to heal.¹³⁸

· Abubakar Akumfi-Ameyaw, a Ghanaian journalist and cameraman, who has lived in Germany for twelve years, described an experience in Bremen.¹³⁹

In 1990 I was working as a cameraman at a soccer game in Bremen. I left the field to get a cable from my car. When I returned to the staff entrance, a policeman grabbed me by the back of my shirt. He wouldn't let me in. He said, "You nigger. You must be a monkey. You can't be working a camera."

· Emelia Ogubuike Madu, a Nigerian whose asylum application had been rejected, was taken from Volkstedt Prison in handcuffs and leg chains to the airport in Berlin to be deported to Nigeria on June 11, 1994.¹⁴⁰ When he resisted going onto the Balkan Airlines plane, the pilot refused to allow him on board.

I was still handcuffed. I was taken into an airport building and pushed into a small cell. The airport police started beating me.¹⁴¹ There were about ten of them beating me with sticks and with their hands. They were calling me "Nigger." I said, "Yes, my name is Nigger" to get them to stop. I was bleeding; my eyes were puffy.

When I came back to Volkstedt Prison from the Berlin Airport, my face was puffy, abnormal. I had blood in my eyes. My nose, ears, and wrists were swollen. About 10 P.M. on the night I returned, I started vomiting blood. An emergency doctor came. She said I must be taken to the hospital. After two days they took me to the hospital.¹⁴² I had been vomiting blood.

Police brutality is not directed solely at non-Germans, but police brutality toward foreigners does appear to be a growing problem in Germany. Amnesty International concluded in 1994 that there had been a "marked increase in the number of reports of police ill-treatment of foreigners."¹⁴³ Similarly, "a watch-dog group of law-enforcement officials, the federal working group of critical police officers, agrees that the problem is real. 'The fact is, there are a series of events and attacks that suggest a rightist, racist and anti-foreign potential,' said Jürgen Korell, one of the organization's leaders."¹⁴⁴

FAILURE TO PUNISH POLICE MISCONDUCT

By 1992 when the prior Human Rights Watch/Helsinki report was released, numerous instances of police misconduct had been identified. Many argued that the state could only show that it was serious about combatting violence against foreigners if disciplinary action were taken against police officers who abused and failed to protect foreigners. In 1994, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki inquired in each locale about disciplinary or criminal punishment of police officers who engaged in misconduct involving foreigners.

There have been several highly publicized investigations of police abuse of foreigners in the last year, especially in Berlin and Hamburg. As discussed above, some of these cases have resulted or are likely to result in disciplinary or criminal action against the officers. However, disciplinary action has rarely been taken against police officers, and criminal prosecution of police officers for misconduct involving foreigners has been even rarer. A few examples illustrate the situation.

· The 1992 report recounted the murder of an Angolan guest worker, Amadeu Antonio Kiowa, in Eberswalde, northeast of Berlin, on November 25, 1990. Three armed police officers, who had a group of skinheads under surveillance, watched as the skinheads shouted anti-foreigner epithets, beat Amadeu with baseball bats, and left him to die. Another group of police officers located further away waited to respond

until the victims had been severely beaten.¹⁴⁵

In July 1992 the prosecutor's office in Frankfurt/Oder began an investigation into the inaction of the three police officers who stood by and witnessed the violence. The police were charged with neglect of their duty, leading to manslaughter. More than three years went by after the death of Amadeu Antonio before the officers were brought to trial.¹⁴⁶ When the proceedings finally began, the judges dismissed the charges. In May 1994 the judges ruled that there was no proof that intervention by the police would have prevented death. "The judges added that the evidence indicated that the Angolan had suffered fatal injuries at the beginning of the attack, dying from them seven days later, and that an intervention by the police would not have kept him alive."¹⁴⁷ The head of the police in Eberswalde indicated that she would not initiate disciplinary proceedings against the three officers involved.¹⁴⁸

The judicial ruling triggered serious criticism of the government. Hanns Thomas Venske, the coordinator for refugees and migrant workers of the Evangelical Church in Berlin, called it an outrage.¹⁴⁹ "This is a signal to the population that it is alright to do this. It's absurd that the police can refuse to intervene if they are not sure they will be successful. It is unthinkable that the ruling would be the same if the victim were a German bank manager." Britta Grell, of Antirassistische Initiative, echoed him: "The ruling says that standing by and watching violence is alright for police in Germany. This gives the police the message not to intervene."¹⁵⁰

- The 1993 report of the parliamentary investigatory commission, as well as many press accounts, roundly criticized the police in Rostock for their failure to stop the violence in 1992. Ultimately, the minister of the interior and the chief of police resigned in response to the commission's findings. However, almost two years after the riots, in the spring of 1994, the prosecutor's office had pressed charges against only two police officers. The charges are stillpending. No civil cases or disciplinary proceedings were brought against these or any other police officers.¹⁵¹

- The failure of the police in Madgeburg to respond to the violence against foreigners in May 1994 made headlines around the world. The police were roundly criticized by the press. Although fifteen investigatory cases were opened, including seven against specific police officers, all but one of these cases has been closed without charges being brought. In one case, a police officer was suspended and is currently awaiting trial.

- When Alino Kriso-Yasufye was beaten and trampled in front of a disco in Halle in May 1994, the police who arrived at the scene spoke to the assailants and let them go. Then the police denied having seen the assailants. Even police officials reportedly acknowledged that the police response was inadequate.¹⁵² It is unclear whether disciplinary action has been commenced against the police officer in charge at the scene of the crime. Heidi Bohley, a human rights advocate in Halle, said that no disciplinary proceedings had been commenced against the police officers involved, but that one police officer has apparently been removed from duty. No information was available as to the reason for or the duration of the removal from duty.¹⁵³

Many complain that police officers are rarely prosecuted or convicted for abusive conduct, in part because the alleged abuse often takes place when no witnesses are present, leaving the victim with only his word against that of the police. The statistics also reveal that a low number of complaints ever result in a criminal conviction. For example, of the 646 criminal investigations for assault against police officers in Berlin in 1992, 627 were closed without charges being brought. In thenineteen cases that did result in charges against police officers, all were acquitted.¹⁵⁴ The German news weekly *Der Spiegel* also reported that, of the approximately 9,000 criminal investigations of police per year, 6 percent end in conviction. However, the number ending in conviction is much lower for offenses committed by police while on duty.

Recommendations intended to restrain violence-prone police officers are rarely or only half-heartedly implemented. Hardly any of the federal states employ a police ombudsman, who could hear citizens' and police officers' complaints and investigate violent attacks. A recommendation by the interior ministers' conference in May 1993 that foreigners be employed in the police departments has been implemented only sporadically.¹⁵⁵

What is more, there has still been no decision to require that all police officers wear name badges so that victims will be able to identify their abusers. Only a few states are currently "experimenting with name badges."¹⁵⁶

VI. GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO IMPROVE POLICE RESPONSE

The 1992 Human Rights Watch/Helsinki report identified several factors that exacerbated the inadequate police response to attacks on foreigners. It noted that the police in the new federal states generally were poorly equipped. For example, they often lacked working communications gear, as well as effective protective gear for anti-riot duty. In addition, the police in the states that comprised the former GDR

were poorly trained compared to their colleagues in the West. The training deficit was exacerbated by uncertainty about their status. In the first years after unification, the former GDR police officers were reviewed for their political and professional integrity. Their future as police officers was not secure. The demoralization that accompanied this review process was intensified by the realization that police in the new federal states would earn only a portion of the pay of the police in the West.

INCREASED FEDERAL STAFFING

The federal government has taken important steps to improve the protection of foreigners. For example, the Federal Office to Protect the Constitution has enlarged its division to focus on right-wing and xenophobic violence and has increased the personnel in that division.¹⁵⁷ The Federal Office to Protect the Constitution also formed a special task force to coordinate and pool information about right-wing and xenophobic crimes. Similarly, the Federal Office of Criminal Investigation (BKA) increased the personnel assigned to its division on right-wing extremism and restructured its operations. This office has established a working group to assist the states in developing strategies to deal with right-wing violence.¹⁵⁸

IMPROVED POLICE EQUIPMENT

In terms of improving police equipment, the procurement programs in place in the old federal states were shifted to apply to the new states. The federal government financed the procurement of equipment for demonstration and riot control because it wanted police throughout the country to have uniform gear and compatible equipment. Generally, the equipment in the new states is now up to par with that in the rest of the country.

POLICE TRAINING